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Housekeeper's Chat

Monday, September 15, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Good Posture". Menu from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.  
Menu for children.

Bulletin available: Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes.

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Do you know what a Tom Thumb golf course is like? I suppose they are everywhere. Washington has broken out with an absolute epidemic of these toy golf links. People play on them in the daytime, but the evening's the real time to go. Of course they're all lighted up alluringly.

Well, Uncle Ebenezer has taken up the game, and I see very little of him if I'm busy. Sometime, when I've nothing else to do, I daresay I shall learn how to play. Meanwhile, I shall have to endure Uncle Ebenezer practising on the living-room rug, taking his "stance" or whatever you call it, with his feet just so, his hands placed just so on the club, a ball on the floor before him, and even his head cocked in a certain position.

He hasn't broken any vases or lamp shades yet, but I am prepared for the worst. However, his new interest reminds me that I have planned for some time to talk to my radio friends about posture, and this seems to be as good a day as any.

Homemaking women sometimes seem to forget all about their posture, while they are at work. And yet, this matter of good posture, is of such importance that I know of at least one woman, who has devoted her life to studying the subject and advising people about it. She is known as a "posture specialist".

In some States, good posture is an important goal of the extension program for farm women. The home demonstration agent emphasizes the fact that posture makes or breaks your appearance. It makes your clothes easy or hard to fit. And good posture throughout the day's housework makes all the difference between weariness and freshness when night comes. Faulty ways of standing, and sitting, cause much unnecessary fatigue. They may account for backache, tired feet, and a general feeling of slump, which may be quite out of proportion to the amount of work done.

Posture, of course, is the result of habit. It is the unconscious reversion by the muscles and bones to the positions they have been allowed to take day after day. Finally they assume these positions automatically. If these are not correct, we may develop bodily distortions, and an unattractive appearance.

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When bad posture becomes habitual, the spine may become unduly curved, the chest flattened, the shoulders rounded, and the abdomen prominent, or other defects develop. Sometimes these are sufficiently serious to cause displacement of internal organs, leading to many physical ailments.

Let's take a look at ourselves throughout our working day, and see what it is we do that we shouldn't. How about practising some of our work in front of that large mirror, the way Uncle Ebenezer practises his "stance" for the toy golf course?

Perhaps you would like to check yourself by the suggestions for standing posture used by the home demonstration agents who are trying to promote good carriage.

"Feet should be parallel. Weight balanced equally upon ball and heel of feet. Abdomen flat in lower part. No lateral curvature in back, normal curves not exaggerated. Shoulder blades flat across the back; shoulders even. Head erect. Ear, shoulder cap, hip bone, knee, and ankle bone in alignment."

This is the standing position recommended. For sitting there is no specific standard, but from pictures and talks, the women can learn for themselves that one should sit with the feet squarely on the floor, the base of the spine well back in the chair, and if it is necessary to lean forward, as in writing, one should lean from the hips with the back straight and the head following the natural line of the back and neck.

It is fairly easy to catch oneself stooping unnecessarily over the sink, the kitchen table, the wash tubs, or ironing board. Sometimes a little adjustment in the height of these working surfaces, is what is needed.

Good sitting posture is often neglected, because of a natural tendency to relax in a chair, if one is already somewhat tired.

Perhaps the least noticeable and most frequent tendency to slump the shoulders and chest, and thrust the hips out of place, occurs when one is doing work that requires continuous standing, like sweeping, mopping, stirring things at the stove, and so on. That's where I mean to take a hint from Uncle Ebenezer and his golf.

In the best nursery schools nowadays, all apparatus and equipment the children use trains their posture unconsciously. Chairs are built especially to induce good sitting position, exercise bars are placed so that the child assumes a correct posture in using them, balancing boards cause him to walk properly, and many other aids for good physical development and posture are provided.

Most of these ideas could be applied right in our own homes to the physical training of our children, if we think them out carefully. After all, the habits we start in childhood persist for many years, and good posture habits are as easy to start as poor ones.



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Shall we conclude with a menu? How about Corned Beef Hash today? Corned beef hash, brown and crispy, is considered a delicacy in my family, by the way. If I don't have corned beef hash just about ever so often, Uncle Ebenezer, and Billy too, demand to know why.

They even claim that our corned beef hash is better than anybody else's. That is funny, because I use just the same recipe that many others do - the recipe for corned beef hash worked out by the Recipe Lady, for the cookbook with the green cover. It's been some time since I spoke about the radio cookbook, hasn't it?

There are still copies, for any body who wants them. Stop up!

But I'm forgetting the menu. With Corned Beef Hash, let's have Fried Tomatoes; Summer Squash; and, for dessert, Fresh Pear Salad, with Cheese and Crackers.

Shall I run through the menu once more? Corned Beef Hash, Fried Tomatoes; Summer Squash; and, for dessert, Fresh Pear Salad, with Cheese Crackers.

Now that I've finished about good posture, and given you a menu, and everything, I can't wait any longer to tell the big news. My Next-Door-Neighbor is probably landing from South America right now. In a few days she'll be home. It will be just as exciting to hear her adventures as it was to pack her trunk and see her passport and her steamship ticket. If I forget the "fundamentals of home making" for a few days you'll forgive me, won't you?

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